

Woodstock Comprehensive Branding Project - Request for Proposal

Purpose of RFP:

The purpose of this Request for Proposal (RFP) is to solicit proposals to establish a lump sum contract through competitive negotiation with a qualified consulting firm that offers solid experience in marketing research (both quantitative and qualitative), message/positioning development, and municipal identity/branding, including development of a brand values statement; logo development and associated graphic standards; and recommendations for brand rollout through social media marketing as well as traditional marketing. The City of Woodstock is seeking the development of a comprehensive brand marketing campaign, with cohesiveness across all City departments and functions, to drive business attraction and retention, energize current residents and position the municipality as a desirable place for relocation, and enhance general perception.

RFP Requirements:

A. PURPOSE

- 1) The City of Woodstock requests proposals by qualified firms to research, create, and develop an implementation plan for a community branding initiative for the City of Woodstock. Responses to this Request for Proposal (RFP) will provide the City with the information required to assess, evaluate, and select a consultant based on prior experience, qualification, methodology and approach, and work performed in similarly-sized communities. It is important to note that this is a community-branding initiative, but that the brand will be used primarily as an identity for the City of Woodstock and must incorporate or be compatible with current Real Woodstock branding used for tourism, resident attraction and economic development marketing, the Woodstock Police Department Patch, and the current City of Woodstock Square icon.
- 2) The primary goals/objectives to be achieved by the branding initiative include, but are not limited to:
 - a) **Uniformity** – The brand should convey a common message and image to audiences both within and outside the City of Woodstock. A defined message that will market the City of Woodstock locally, statewide, nationally and internationally as a great place to live, work, shop, and do business; a community historically focused on sustainability and conservation; the right place for development, redevelopment and investment; the perfect mix for a business-friendly community. All City asset/venue/service brands must work together more cohesively but should not lose all individual identity and character in the process.
 - b) **Community Identity/Pride** – Identify and promote what makes the City of Woodstock distinct and appealing in a regionally-competitive environment for investors, businesses, retailers, visitors, and residents. City asset/venue/services should have their own identity but clearly be related back to a master City of Woodstock Brand that also works with current Real Woodstock branding.

- c) **Community and Economic Development Promotion** – Promote a healthy economy, attract private investment, new residents and young professionals, and retain key businesses and creative talent.
- d) **Flexibility** – The brand must be flexible and adaptable in order to meet the needs of a variety of departments and municipal functions within the City, as well as groups and businesses within the City in their specific marketing initiatives, while maintaining consistency with their overall brand. It must also be flexible enough to grow and evolve along with any changes in the market.
- e) **Endorsement** – The brand must be authentic and resonate with community leadership in the City of Woodstock and with business leadership in the greater McHenry County area.

B. ELIGIBILITY

- 1) The consultant should specialize in project management, research, marketing, and creative design as it relates to the development of a community brand. To be eligible to respond to the RFP, the consultant must demonstrate that it is a firm with significant experience with community branding initiatives. Priority will be given to those firms that have experience with local governments in this type of work.
- 2) The City of Woodstock desires to issue a contract to a single qualified consultant to lead the project. Consulting proposals based on a consortium approach where more than one firm will provide support within a consulting team are acceptable with a single project manager point of contact.

C. SCOPE OF WORK

- 1) **Project Management** – The consultant will lead all aspects of the City of Woodstock community marketing and branding initiative, including the following:
 - a) **Advisor** to the Steering Committee (to be determined) – This team will be composed of representatives from City departments and community leaders. Meetings throughout the process will be required.
 - b) **Lead** for facilitating various focus groups comprised of community leadership and business owners to determine existing attitudes, perceptions, opportunities and challenges to enhancing the City's image.
 - c) **Facilitator** during the research process and/or testing of the new brand – Include descriptions of community engagement efforts that will take place during this process. The consultant will be expected to employ creative means of public involvement to ensure that community leaders and the business community are aware of and involved in the project.
- 2) **Research** – Research will be the basis for the development of a brand concept, creative elements, messaging/positioning and the overall brand initiative. The consultant will create and implement a brand research plan, which will include qualitative and quantitative research with key stakeholders to identify the following:
 - a) The key elements of the City of Woodstock.
 - b) Analysis of competitor marketing strategies.
 - c) Measures that will be used to determine if the branding effort is successful.

- 3) **Strategic Plan** – The consultant will develop strategic objectives that will help better inform the City of Woodstock on implementation, management and ongoing promotion of the brand to include, but not be limited to the following:
- a) Brand Standards to illustrate use of the brand among City of Woodstock departments.
 - b) Maintenance and consistency of brand image and messaging while providing suitable flexibility for the target audiences of the participating agencies.
 - c) Recommendations of ways to articulate the brand; define markets and promotional avenues; and advise on strategies to better promote and create brand awareness.
- 4) **Creative/Development of Brand** – The consultant will develop creative elements that include design concepts, logos, messages, brand statement, tagline, and other products to support the overall brand initiative rollout on websites, social media platforms, printed materials such as posters and brochures, digital ads, email banners, other marketing and advertising templates, uniforms, and vehicle stickers for the following assets and function of the City
- a) The City of Woodstock (maintaining Square icon in some capacity as it is used throughout the City on gateway signage)
 - b) The Woodstock Opera House and application for Opera House collateral, website and social media
 - c) Stage Left Café and application for Stage Left collateral, website and social media
 - d) Recreation Department including the Recreation Center and Aquatic Centers and application for Recreation Department vehicles, collateral, website and social media
 - e) The Woodstock Police Department including application of branding on vehicles (maintaining current patch/seal)
 - f) The Woodstock Public Library including Creative Woodstock Initiative in the Old Courthouse
 - g) The Old Courthouse & Sheriffs House (for destination marketing)
 - h) The City of Woodstock Economic Development Department's Choose Woodstock Website targeted to developers, realtors, investors and businesses. Collateral branded material.
 - i) The City of Woodstock Finance, HR, Building and Zoning, and Public Works Departments' Letterhead and application for Building and Zoning, and Public Works Vehicles
 - j) The City Manager's Office and Mayor's Offices letterhead.
 - k) Print and electronic advertising
 - l) Website design
 - m) Media placement

A sampling of creative direction/options, along with any previous comparable client work should be presented initially with the proposal. The contract award will require a minimum of three initial design options to select from and the City will be allowed to request two to three design modifications once the final concept is selected. The selected logo designs will be delivered to the City digitally in .ai, .eps, .jpeg, .pdf, and .png formats in white, black, and full color options with a white background and a transparent background variation. The final designs will also be delivered with a style manual and guidelines for use and the capability of use in the following:

- a) Public relations/Media
 - b) Events
 - c) Letterhead and Ad Templates
- 2) **Implementation Plan** – The consultant will develop an action plan for implementation of the brand in sufficient detail to allow the Steering Committee to understand the approach and work plan. An Action Plan should include, but not be limited to the following:
- a) Estimated costs/budget associated with the implementation process.
 - b) Proposed timelines for development of creative elements.
 - c) Recommended positioning logo and brand guidelines.
 - d) Implementation plans for brand-identity applications and brand-identity maintenance plan.

D. SPECIFIC PROPOSAL PREPARATION INSTRUCTIONS

- 1) Proposals should be as thorough and detailed as possible so that the City may properly evaluate the capabilities of the firm to provide the required services and results.
- 2) The firm shall submit one (1) electronic copy by email to dgulli@woodstockil.gov, or by emailing a link to a file-sharing platform. Please do not send hard (paper) copies by mail.
- 3) A description of the firm's capabilities and experience conducting similar plans. Include a description of the firm, its organizational structure, location of the principal office and the location of the office that would manage this project.
- 4) A summary of professional qualifications and experience of the individuals the firm would assign to the project and their individual project responsibilities. Indicate whether these individuals have worked together on previous projects. Indicate each individual's current commitment, availability to start this project in Q1 2022 and percentage of time that they will be assigned to complete their project tasks on this job.
- 5) Specific plans or methodology to be used to perform the services with timeline proposed for each phase of the project. Include a description of community engagement efforts included and deliverables proposed.
- 6) Estimated timeline for completion through implementation.
- 7) References (names and contact information) for clients for which the firm performed projects of a similar type and size within the last five years. Describe in detail, each projects outcome and the process your firm used to achieve those outcomes. Reference letters are recommended.
- 8) A work sample of a completed project(s) that is representative of the work proposed for the City.

9) Proposal Lump Sum Fee (not-to-exceed) for this project. Provide a detailed cost for each phase of the project, including but not limited to, the number of meetings with stakeholders, travel expenses, and document production costs.

10) Proposed engagement agreement with terms and conditions.

E. EVALUATION CRITERIA

1) Proposals will be evaluated by the City using the following criteria:

- a) Qualifications and experience of the firm and individuals to be assigned to this project in providing requested services.
- b) Specific plans or methodology to be used to perform the services.
- c) Reference letters from other clients.
- d) Quality of illustrative examples.
- e) Proposed Lump Sum Fee.
- f) accept or reject any/or all submissions of proposals;
- g) to waive any irregularity, technicality, informality or discrepancy in a proposal;
- h) accept any alternative submission of proposals presented, which in its opinion, would best serve the interests of the City
- i) give full and proper evaluation of the Vendor or team presenting the proposal.

2) All qualified submissions received by the deadline will be analyzed by the City according to the criteria outlined in this RFP.

3) Failure to comply with the provisions of the RFP may cause a proposal to be rejected.

4) The City reserves the right to:

5) The City shall be the sole judge of the proposals, and the resulting negotiated agreement that is in its best interest, and its decision shall be final.

F. ANTICIPATED DATES

Projected RFP Release: Tuesday February 1, 2022

RFP Due Date: Monday February 28, 2022

Brand Rollout: Summer 2022